

The U.S. Embassy is pleased to announce a writing competition in cooperation with Iceland Writers Retreat!

Official Contest Rules

Write US - U.S. Embassy Literary Grant in cooperation with the Iceland Writers Retreat

Contest Sponsors¹

Write US is sponsored by the U.S. Department of State, **U.S. Embassy, Reykjavik Iceland** and Iceland Writers Retreat.

Description of Contest Objectives

Contestants will write about the relationship between the U.S. and Iceland with the goal of maintaining and strengthening the relationship between Iceland and the U.S.

The winners of the competition will receive attendance to the Iceland Writers Retreat plus a daytrip with the international participants and featured U.S. writers.

- The authors of the winning entries will receive a delegate spot at the Iceland Writers Retreat 2016, and all other items listed on the registration page www.icelandwritersretreat.com/register)

* Please note however that accommodation is not included and those from outside the capitol area will need to secure their own accommodations.

- ***The prize does not include airfare to Iceland, airport transfers, accommodations or any expenses not itemized in the delegate description.**

- The prize does not include attendance at the Relax & Write extension.

- Only one entry per person.

- The entry must be your own original work.

- The entry must not have been published elsewhere, either in print or online.

-The entry must include an introductory letter (one page), a writing sample in Icelandic or English (1-2 pages maximum), an explanation of why the participants want to attend the Iceland Writers retreat (1-2 paragraphs), an explanation of how the participants intend to share his/her experience (1-2 paragraphs).

-Applicants should have strong English and Icelandic speaking, reading and writing skills.

¹ Throughout the contest rules, the term “sponsors” is used to represent either single or multiple sponsors, where applicable.

- The winner grants the U.S. Embassy and Iceland Writers Retreat the right to publish their submission (with credit) in conjunction with the promotion.
- Submissions that do not win will not be published.
- Applicants must be 18 years old or older on the day the retreat begins (April 13, 2016) to enter.
- There is no entry fee.
- Winners will be announced on March 14, 2016.

(See the “Eligibility” section below to find out who is eligible to be a contestant.)

Platform(s)

Events from this contest may be announced and promoted on various Social Media platforms including Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, Instagram and the U.S: Embassy Reykjavik website, but contest entry and administration will take place through e-mail via ReykjavikPublicAffairs@State.gov. Contest winners may also be announced on Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram; however Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram are not partners or sponsors of the contest. Contestants are reminded that by participating in the contest and uploading content to Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram, they are bound by Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram’s Terms of Service and any agreements with Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Instagram contained therein.

How to Enter

The applicant sends an application before February 20, 2016 to ReykjavikPublicAffairs@state.gov including an introductory letter (maximum 1 page); an explanation, in English, of why the participant wants to attend Iceland Writers Retreat (maximum 1-2 paragraphs); details, in Icelandic or English, of how the participant would share the experience with the public; and an essay on U.S. – Icelandic relations, 1-2 pages in either Icelandic or English.

Participation in the contest is deemed as acceptance of these Official Contest Rules. Once an entry is submitted, it is considered a final submission and may not be modified, edited or replaced.

The contest commences at **January 6, 2016, 8 a.m. (GMT)**. Entries may be submitted between **January 6, 2016, 8 a.m. (GMT)** and **February 20, 2016 at 23:59 (GMT)**. Judging begins on **February 21, 2016** and ends on **March 14, 2016**.

Content Requirements

- a. Submissions must not contain obscenity, explicit sexual material, nudity, profanity, graphic violence, calls or incitement to violence, commercial solicitation or commercial promotion. Submissions must conform to local law and must not contain content or images that could be considered abusive, inflammatory, denigrating, or disrespectful to any of the Contest Sponsors, or to any groups, individuals or institutions. Submissions must adhere both in appearance and in fact to the norms of civil discourse. In other words, the content of all submissions must be suitable for a global, public audience.
- b. Submissions must be original content created by the contestant and must not contain any elements that are protected by someone else's copyright or otherwise subject to third party intellectual property or proprietary rights, including privacy and publicity rights (except as expressly permitted below in (d)). Contest Sponsors recognize no allowance for "fair use" of copyrighted material, nor do Contest Sponsors recognize allowance for use of licensed materials created or owned by a third party.
- c. Contest Sponsors reserve the right to disqualify, at their sole and absolute discretion, any submission that does not adhere to these criteria and to the intent and substance of these Official Contest Rules.
- d. In the event of any question or difference of views regarding compliance with, interpretation, or application of these content requirements or other provisions of these Official Contest Rules, Contest Sponsors reserve the exclusive right to resolve such questions or differences of views in their sole discretion.

Eligibility

- a. Contestants must be at least 18 years old on the date of entry into the contest. Contestants must be residents of Iceland and may not be U.S. citizens or lawful permanent residents of the U.S.
- b. The individual submitting the entry will be considered the contestant and will be the only individual eligible to compete for the prize. Organizations are not eligible to compete for the prize, either as an entity, or through representation by an individual. In order to be eligible for the prize, the contestant must provide complete and accurate information.
- c. The following individuals are not eligible to participate in the contest: Employees, interns, directors, and officers of the Contest Sponsors, Iceland Writers Retreat, or the U.S. Government; or any employees, interns, directors, officers of any agencies, companies or entities involved in the administration, advertising, judging, creation, development, execution, and/or fulfillment of the contest, and the immediate family members (defined

as spouse, recognized partner, parent, child, sibling, and spouse or "step" of each) and those living in the same household of each such individual.

- d. Once a submission has been accepted for entry into the contest, the contestant's name (or User ID, if the contestants wishes to remain anonymous) and country may be publicly identified at the sole discretion of the contestants.

Selection of a Winner

- a. All submissions are subject to pre-screening by Contest Sponsors to ensure compliance with these Official Contest Rules. Any submissions out of compliance will not be posted. Contest Sponsors reserve the right in their sole and absolute discretion to verify in the final analysis whether a potential finalist or potential winning submission has fully complied with these Official Contest Rules before posting to the contest site, awarding prize, recognizing as winner, etc.
- b. **Judges: The contest jury is comprised of four Public Affairs Staff Members of the U.S. Embassy:**

Brian Beckmann, Public Affairs Officer
Helga Magnúsdóttir, Cultural Specialist
Kristinn Gilsdorf, Information Specialist
Ásgrímur Sigurðsson, New Media Specialist

- c. **Judging Criteria:**

The winning essays will be selected based on the following criteria:

- Clear presentment of the topic
- Original voice
- Unique style
- Fresh point of view
- Creativity
- Descriptive language
- Good diction
- Interesting ideas
- Valuable content and/or research incorporated into the essay
- Peer impact
- Spelling/Grammar/ Word Count
- Strong writing skills

Some participants may display all of these components - some may not, but may still be strong enough for us to choose them for the program.

- d. **Winners:**

Each winner and/or finalist will be required to sign and return to Contest Sponsors a

statement of eligibility and liability/publicity release and provide a short bio (where applicable) and a brief statement about the submission; otherwise the winner and/or finalist will be ineligible for any prize. The inability of Contest Sponsors to contact a potential winner may result in disqualification and/or selection of an alternate winner from among all remaining eligible submissions.

- e. Winners and finalists will be notified via the e-mail address they provided upon entry. Winners and finalists may be announced on the Embassy website and/or social media pages. Winners and finalists may choose to use an alias instead of their real name and may request other identifying information be kept private.

Prize(s)

- a. The winners of the competition will receive attendance to the Iceland Writers Retreat plus a daytrip with the international participants and featured U.S. writers.
- b. Winners have to confirm the acceptance of the prize in an email reply within three calendar days. If the acceptance is not confirmed by the required date, the Contest Sponsors reserve the right to select an alternative winner. Each winner must provide a valid physical mailing address where a prize, if any, is to be shipped. Contest Sponsors are not responsible for any problems related to the shipping of any prize, including, but not limited to, theft, delay, damage, or destruction/accidental loss by the shipping carrier.
- c. Any unused portion of the prize is not transferable, convertible, or exchangeable and cannot be taken as cash. All taxes on or in connection with any prize, and the reporting consequences thereof, are the sole and exclusive responsibility of the winner.

Liability and Rights

- a. Contest Sponsors do not endorse any submissions or messages expressed therein, and Contest Sponsors expressly disclaim any and all liability in connection with the submitted essays including disputes between collaborators related to a submission.
- b. The contest and its sponsors do not permit copyright infringing activities or infringement of any other intellectual property rights, and Contest Sponsors reserve the right to remove and disqualify any submission they deem to be in violation of another party's copyright or other intellectual property rights.
- c. Contestants retain sole ownership of their original work. The submission remains the intellectual property of contestant, and the Contest Sponsors and U.S. Government make no claim of copyright as to the work of any individual who enters the contest. Contestant specifically agrees to give the Contest Sponsors permission to use all content submitted for purposes of judging the contest. Finalists and/or

winners will be required to grant Contest Sponsors, with proper attribution through whatever means they deem appropriate, a worldwide, non-exclusive, royalty-free, sub-licensable and transferable license to use, reproduce, distribute, prepare derivative works of, and/or display the submission in any media formats and through any media channels in perpetuity in connection with the activities and operations of the contest.

- d. Contestant assumes sole responsibility for the contest submission and the material contained in it, and for any consequences of submitting or posting it.
- e. Contest Sponsors reserve the right at any time to verify the validity of entries and of contestants and to disqualify any contestant or entry deemed not in compliance with these Official Contest Rules. Contest Sponsors also reserve the right to request further documentation, at their sole and absolute discretion, to verify eligibility and compliance with these Official Contest Rules.
- f. If a prize or any portion thereof is unavailable, Contest Sponsors, in their sole discretion, reserve the right to substitute the prize with another prize of equal or greater value and/or specification.
- g. Contest Sponsors reserve the right, at any time and in their sole discretion, to disqualify and/or deem ineligible any individual who they reasonably believe (i) has violated the Official Contest Rules; (ii) has violated the terms of use of platform, or (iii) is acting in a bad faith, or in an unsportsmanlike or disruptive manner, or with intent to annoy, abuse, threaten or harass any other person.
- h. Contest Sponsors reserve the right to modify, suspend, terminate or cancel the contest at their discretion for any reason.
- i. Contestant agrees to indemnify and hold harmless Contest Sponsors, their parent, subsidiary and affiliated companies, officers, directors, employees, interns, and agents, from and against any and all claims, damages, obligations, losses, liabilities, costs or debts, and expenses (including but not limited to attorney's fees) arising from (i) violation of these Official Contest Rules; (ii) violation of any third party right, including without limitation any copyright, trademark, intellectual property, privacy, publicity, or other proprietary right in connection with the contest; or (iii) any claim that a contest submission caused any harm, including financial, to any third party. These indemnification and hold harmless obligations will survive indefinitely beyond the conclusion of the contest.
- j. The conduct, judging, and awarding of prizes will be carried out in full compliance with applicable U.S. law and host country law. In the event of a conflict between U.S. law and host country law, U.S. law shall apply.
- k. Contest Sponsors and the U.S. Government will take reasonable measures to protect privacy data, personally identifiable information, and other sensitive data of

contestants. Contact information provided by contestants may be stored by **the U.S. Embassy in Reykjavik, Iceland** and may be used to contact contestants for other purposes in the future. This information may be shared with the co-sponsor of the contest and/or be made available to third parties, to the extent permitted by law.

- l. Contest Sponsors assume no liability or responsibility for any loss or harm resulting from any user's participation in or attempt to participate in the contest or ability or inability to upload, download, or otherwise access any information in connection with participating in the contest. Contest Sponsors assume no responsibility or liability for technical problems, or technical malfunctions arising in connection with the operation of the contest, including: hardware or software errors; faulty computer, telephone, cable, satellite, network, electronic, wireless or Internet connectivity, or other online communication problems; errors or limitations of any Internet service providers, servers, hosts or providers; garbled, jumbled or faulty data transmissions; failure of any email transmissions to be sent or received; lost, late, delayed or intercepted email transmissions; inaccessibility of the contest site in whole or in part for any reason; traffic congestion on the Internet or the contest site; unauthorized human or non-human intervention in the operation of the contest, including without limitation, unauthorized tampering, hacking, theft, virus, bugs, worms; or destruction of any aspect of the contest, or loss, miscount, misdirection, inaccessibility or unavailability of an email account used in connection with the contest.
- m. Use of contest site is at user's own risk. Contest Sponsors are not responsible for any personal injury, property damage, or losses of any kind which may be sustained to computer equipment resulting from participation in the contest, use of the contest site or the downloading of information from the contest site. By participating in the contest, the contestant releases Contest Sponsors from any and all claims arising from or relating to such contestant's participation in the contest, whether directly or indirectly.
- n. Contest Sponsors are not liable in the event that any portion of the contest is cancelled or delayed due to weather, fire, strike, acts of war or terrorism, or any other reason.